

March 3, 2004

Fowler Town Council
c/o Thelma Kendrew, Fowler Town Clerk
87 Little York Road
Gouverneur, New York 13642

Dear Council Members,

As you know, many property owners in the Town of Fowler as well as adjacent towns have been concerned about the effects of the 2003 caterpillar outbreak on their forests and trees. There are also valid concerns about coming seasons since the pests, particularly the Forest Tent Caterpillar, often can have cyclical outbreaks that last more than one year. Given certain compounding conditions such as possible drought, repeated severe defoliation are known to invite dieback and damage to desirable forest trees, potentially on a broad scale.

Since first reported last year, Cooperative Extension has been tracking the situation and making preliminary preparation for ways to inform local stakeholders about the infestation. That has lead to a cooperative effort with your Task Force and other groups such as New York State D.E.C. This group effort is now planning a special public educational presentation day on the issue by a panel of State and University forest experts, who are available on Saturday, April 3rd, tentatively 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. inclusive.

Such an event needs a conducive site, but the Gouverneur High School auditorium is set up for an evening booking. We have found alternatives, but all have costs as well as advantages/disadvantages as follows:

- Gouverneur Elks Club – adequate adult seating, darkenable room, ample off-road parking, and lunch can be offered onsite. Cost: \$75.00 (normally \$150 rental)
- Fowler Elementary Cafeteria – close, but not darkenable, parking runs out onto Route 48, offsite lunch, and insurance question with building use form. Cost: \$50.00/4 hours, additional hours may be needed
- Harrisville High School auditorium – farther away? seats, pit available, not stage. Cost: \$60.00 for custodian for up to 6 hours.

Therefore, we are humbly requesting funding assistance for such costs as above to hold the event for area constituents. Today's budgets, especially here, leave little extra, we realize, but if you can support this, we can move ahead immediately with the event.

Having experience with the first two choices above, I can see the advantages of the Elks Club standing out, for a cost close to Fowler Elementary. It may be our best choice without the High School in a busy season. If you could approve up to \$75.00 for site costs, we again can promote the event immediately. Meantime, we will seek other funds where possible to help defray that, so actual costs can be further spread out before bills are paid.

Please let me know if I can fill in any further details at this point, and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Steve VanderMark
Senior Extension Resource Educator